

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Union Station Post Office Annex

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 329 South 18th Street

not for publication

city, town St. Louis

vicinity of

state Missouri

code 29

county City of St. Louis

code 510

3. Classification

Category

district

☒ building(s)

structure

site

object

Ownership

public

☒ private

both

Public Acquisition

in process

being considered

☒ N/A

Status

occupied

☒ unoccupied

work in progress

Accessible

yes: restricted

yes: unrestricted

☒ no

Present Use

agriculture

commercial

educational

entertainment

government

industrial

military

museum

park

private residence

religious

scientific

transportation

☒ other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Post Office Annex Associates

street & number 8860 Ladue Road

city, town St. Louis, MO 63124

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Louis City Hall

street & number Market Street at Tucker Blvd.

city, town St. Louis

state Missouri 63101

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Architectural Survey of the Central
title Business District, St. Louis

has this property been determined eligible? yes ☒ no

October 1975; Revised April 1977;

date February 1982

federal state county ☒ local

depository for survey records Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

city, town St. Louis

state Missouri

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☒ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Eames and Young's Post Office Annex is located at the junction of 18th and Clark Streets within the St. Louis Union Station rail yards, (Photo #3). Completed in 1904, this structure measures 43' by 228' and features red, pressed-brick bearing walls rising three stories. Though constructed primarily for use as a service building, the three bay by twenty-one bay Second Renaissance Revival composition is well proportioned and is embellished with both stone and terra cotta detailing.

Each of the four symmetrical elevations of the Post Office Annex is treated in a similar manner; there is no articulated formal entrance. The brick surface is smooth and serves as an effective neutral backdrop for windows, doorways and engaged Tuscan pilasters. The simple base is defined by heavy bands of white stone. Lower and second story windows are linked by the stone lintel and sill courses which enframe the projecting string course on each elevation. Window and door openings have been boarded on the lower story to prevent access to the fire-gutted structure, (see Photo #2). Originally, entrances to the structure were placed randomly on both the east and west elevations. Panelled wood doors were capped by six-light transoms in each opening.

four-over-two lower story sash windows were unembellished and featured narrow stone sills. (See Photo #1.)

Similar four-over-two sash windows are employed on the second and third stories. However, upper story bays are articulated by simplified Tuscan pilasters with terra cotta capitals. Third story windows are slightly abbreviated and feature narrow stone sills. A panelled terra cotta cornice terminates each elevation; the frieze on the east elevation is imprinted with the title "St. Louis Post Office Annex."

The hipped roof was originally executed in slate with copper cresting tile. It has since been sheathed in asphalt shingling. Original half-circle eyebrow dormers (see Photo #1) have been replaced by wood-framed, gabled dormers on the west elevation.

The interior of the Post Office Annex exhibits straightforward mill construction. The interior, roof and existing window frames are in extremely poor condition due to a fire that heavily damaged the structure in 1979.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates 1903-04 **Builder/Architect** Eames & Young

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Union Station Post Office Annex at Eighteenth Street and Clark Avenue in downtown St. Louis qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C, and is eligible under the following areas of significance: COMMUNITY PLANNING: The Union Station Post Office Annex was one of several structures erected in the years 1902-1904 in the rail yards behind Union Station to accommodate the increased passenger and freight business anticipated throughout the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. The Post Office Annex was critical to a carefully engineered plan which, despite obstacles of space limitations and ceaseless traffic, successfully increased the freight handling capacity of St. Louis' Union Station twofold. This particular structure was designed to connect to the main train shed and baggage express buildings through a pedestrian subway, and to the main branch of the United States Post Office through a pneumatic tube system. ARCHITECTURE: Completed in 1904 from plans executed by the St. Louis firm of Eames & Young, the Post Office Annex featured a highly efficient plan with basement subway, hydraulic freight elevators and underground pneumatic tube system which were integrally related to the comprehensive plan for the swift handling of baggage and mail under the Union Station shed. Compatible with its innovative plan, the exterior of the building is articulated in a restrained Second Renaissance Revival style distinguished by unusually fine proportions, a judicious use of detailing and brick masonry construction of high quality. The Annex's dignified, classical facades were an appropriate expression for a semi-public building housing a branch of the U. S. Postal Service.

Early in 1902, the management of the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis realized that the rail facilities in and around the city, which were even then inadequate, would fail altogether under the increased volume of both passenger and freight business that was expected in connection with the World's Fair to be held in St. Louis in 1904. Probable attendance at the Fair was estimated at 35 million people by city officials. This great influx of passengers at Union Station would be accompanied by a large increase in freight business caused by consignments of materials and exhibits. Confronted by deficiencies on every hand, a master plan for improvements to Union Station and to tertiary stations was quickly drawn up by the staff of Daniel Breck, Chief Engineer of the Terminal Railroad Association. Alterations and improvements proposed in the ambitious plan sought to more than double the capacity of St. Louis' Station, a facility heralded just ten years earlier as the largest and most efficient in the world.¹

A new method of handling baggage, mail and express was also devised. By the 1891 system, these functions were a constant source of delay as well as danger. An enormous amount of hand-trucking was required to transfer baggage and mail to the correct cars.

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Continuation sheet Union Station Post Office Item number 8
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The loaded trucks were often pulled and lifted over thirty-two sets of tracks (a distance that amounted to over 1,600 feet); long trains were often disengaged or "cut" to allow trucks to pass--an inevitable cause of delay. Baggage and mail trucks were constantly being struck by incoming trains in spite of all precautions to prevent it. Baggage and mail houses alongside Track One (see Figure 1) were not large enough to hold the excesses. By 1902, Tracks One and Two were always piled high with baggage, thus rendering them useless.

In order to provide additional storage space and to cut down on the enormous amount of trucking required, new express buildings and a separate mail building were erected to connect with a unique subway system. The main subway measured 100 feet wide and ran from east to west entirely across the south end of the train shed. Connecting with this main subway, a system of additional (narrow) subways was constructed to serve Express buildings, the Power House and the new Post Office Annex, (see Figure 2). By the progressive 1902 plan, baggage was unloaded and lowered into the subway on one of the seventeen elevators located between each pair of tracks under the train shed. Items were then sorted and trucked beneath the shed to their destination. Mail and express were handled in a similar manner, utilizing a separate set of seventeen elevators. During the two years in which the majority of construction was underway, the number of cars handled daily in Union Station doubled while the number of leads into the station was temporarily halved by the reconstruction. The Post Office Annex is located on a site formerly occupied by lines feeding the old express buildings on the east border of the rail yard. (See Figures 1 and 2.) As the new express structures were constructed on the opposing border, this site was slowly cleared to house the separate mail handling facility.

The Post Office Annex was designed by St. Louis architects Eames & Young and erected by the nationally prominent company headed by George A. Fuller. The contracting firm, still active today, was incorporated in Chicago in 1882 and eventually had major offices in New York, Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Kansas City and Atlanta. The St. Louis branch office, established in 1897, was responsible for the whirlwind construction of Eames & Young's 1898 Lincoln Trust building in downtown.² Although Eames & Young had received an invitation to participate in the 1891 competition for Union Station,³ their reputation rested chiefly on large residential commissions until the 1890s construction of the St. Louis Cupples warehouse complex gained them national recognition for their expertise in engineering and planning. The centralized Cupples network, interconnected by underground tunnels and spur lines to the railroads, was appraised by Engineering News as "probably the most successful effort along these lines in this country" and by Scientific American as having been "worked out on a scale of elaborateness with a perfection of detail unequaled by any similar institution in the world."⁴

An obvious choice for the Post Office Annex commission, Eames & Young applied the functional skills they had exhibited at Cupples to the requirements of the Annex project. The basement of the structure was divided lengthwise by a brick wall into east and west sections so that streetcars loaded with mail could enter the east half

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of the building directly from an incline off 18th Street, (Figure 3: North Elevation). Ten foot high rolling doors were located at intervals along the dividing wall to allow the passage of mail from east to west half, (Figure 3: Longitudinal Section). Careful siting of the structure insured that the west portion of the Mail Annex basement connected directly with the underground mail truckway located along the south wall of the main subway. The three floors above grade housed the Railway Mail Service on the north end of the structure; the United States Post Office quarters occupied the remainder of the available space in fulfillment of a contractual obligation to the U. S. Postal Service (Figure 3: First Floor Plan). Various operations of sorting and handling mail were carried out on these floors. When mail was ready for trains, (mail) sacks were lowered to the basement on one of two freight elevators, trucked to the proper elevator in the main subway, raised and loaded into cars. The processing of mail was further hastened by the installation of an underground pneumatic tube system between the Annex and the main Post Office on Olive Street in downtown St. Louis. Carriers, twenty-six inches long, each holding over 500 letters, were exchanged between these two structures in eight inch air-forced tubes (one for movement in each direction).

For the exterior of the building, Eames & Young employed a frugal yet deft interpretation of the Second Renaissance Revival style. With its strongly marked first story, pilastered upper stories and hipped ridge roof, the Annex reflected the influence of Italian palazzo models promoted by McKim, Mead & White of New York. The building also conformed to the 1901 official promulgation of the "classic style" for federal buildings;⁵ its restrained but unusually well-proportioned design imparted a sense of order and dignity appropriate to its function as a subordinate, semi-public structure housing a federal agency.

All construction projects in the rail yards at Union Station approached a stage of completion in the spring of 1904. Passenger trains handled by the station increased from 7,427 in October of 1903 to 14,356 in October 1904. Baggage checked in the same period more than doubled to 2,500 pieces per hour, and, with the construction of a separate mail handling facility, approximately 25,000 pounds of mail were processed daily at a rate days faster than in the previous year. The Eames & Young design, employing elevators, pneumatic tubes and the newly designed train shed subway proved to be very successful. It was boasted in 1905 that letters mailed at the main Post Office downtown took less than six minutes to reach and be processed through the Post Office Annex located 1.2 miles southwest and subsequently loaded onto an outbound train.⁶

The terminal was in heavy use through the 1940s when an average of 100,000 people passed through the station daily. However, the introduction of new highway and air transportation systems in the mid 20th century contributed to the eventual abandonment of the established rail network in downtown St. Louis and the eventual demolition of the scattered service buildings. In 1979, fire gutted the interior of the Post Office Annex.

The head house and train shed were declared a National Historic Landmark site in 1970. In 1978, the last train left from Union Station and Amtrak relocated at a temporary building a few blocks away. Several unsuccessful schemes were proposed for the Union Station complex before a partnership of the Rouse Company and Omni

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International acquired the property. The head house has been painstakingly restored for office and hotel use; new structures have been built under the train shed. That project, scheduled for a grand opening in late August 1985, has prompted renewed interest in the Post Office Annex for conversion to office space.

FOOTNOTES

¹St. Louis Post-Dispatch; "New Union Station Opens." September 2, 1894, p. 14.

²The George A. Fuller Construction Company enjoyed a national reputation as a builder of "sky-scraper" structures. Their portfolio included works by Burnham & Root (Monadnock Block), H. H. Richardson (Marshall Field Wholesale), Adler & Sullivan (Carson Pirie Scott), McKim, Mead & White (Pennsylvania Station) in addition to many other well-known architects. Fuller was retained by the Terminal Railroad Association to erect not only the Post Office Annex, but also the new power house, cooling station, express buildings and several tertiary structures.

³Compensation to the winner of \$10,000 was to include working drawings for the Station plus general designs for sheds and auxiliary buildings. Of the ten invited firms, three (Eames & Young, Peabody & Stearns and Burnham & Root) notified the Terminal that they would not enter the competition.

⁴Scientific American, August 29, 1903 and Engineering News, November 14, 1895, p. 331.

⁵The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics and Symbols in United States Government Buildings, Lois Craig, MIT Press c. 1977, p. 210-211, p 236-237.

⁶Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis: Report of the Chief Engineer on Improvements Made 1902-1904. Buxton and Skinner Print, St. Louis, 1905, p. 264.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Granite City, IL/MO

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification 329 S. 18th Street is located in City Block 1669 and City Block 458, and fronts 115 feet along the west side of 18th Street and 36 feet along the south line of Clark Street.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|-------|------|--------|------|

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|-------|------|--------|------|

11. Form Prepared By (C) Landmarks Association of St. Louis Inc.

1.
name/title Barbara Lang: Researcher; Mary M. Stiritz, Carolyn H. Toft: Editors

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis Inc. date May 31, 1985

street & number 721 Olive St., Room 1113 telephone (314)421-6474

city or town St. Louis state MO 63101

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

for Frederick A. Brunner, Ph.D., P.E., Director, Department of Natural Resources, and
title State Historic Preservation Officer date 8/13/85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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Continuation sheet Union Station Post Office Item number 9
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"Union Station Improvements." St. Louis Builder, April 1904.

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UNION STATION POST OFFICE ANNEX

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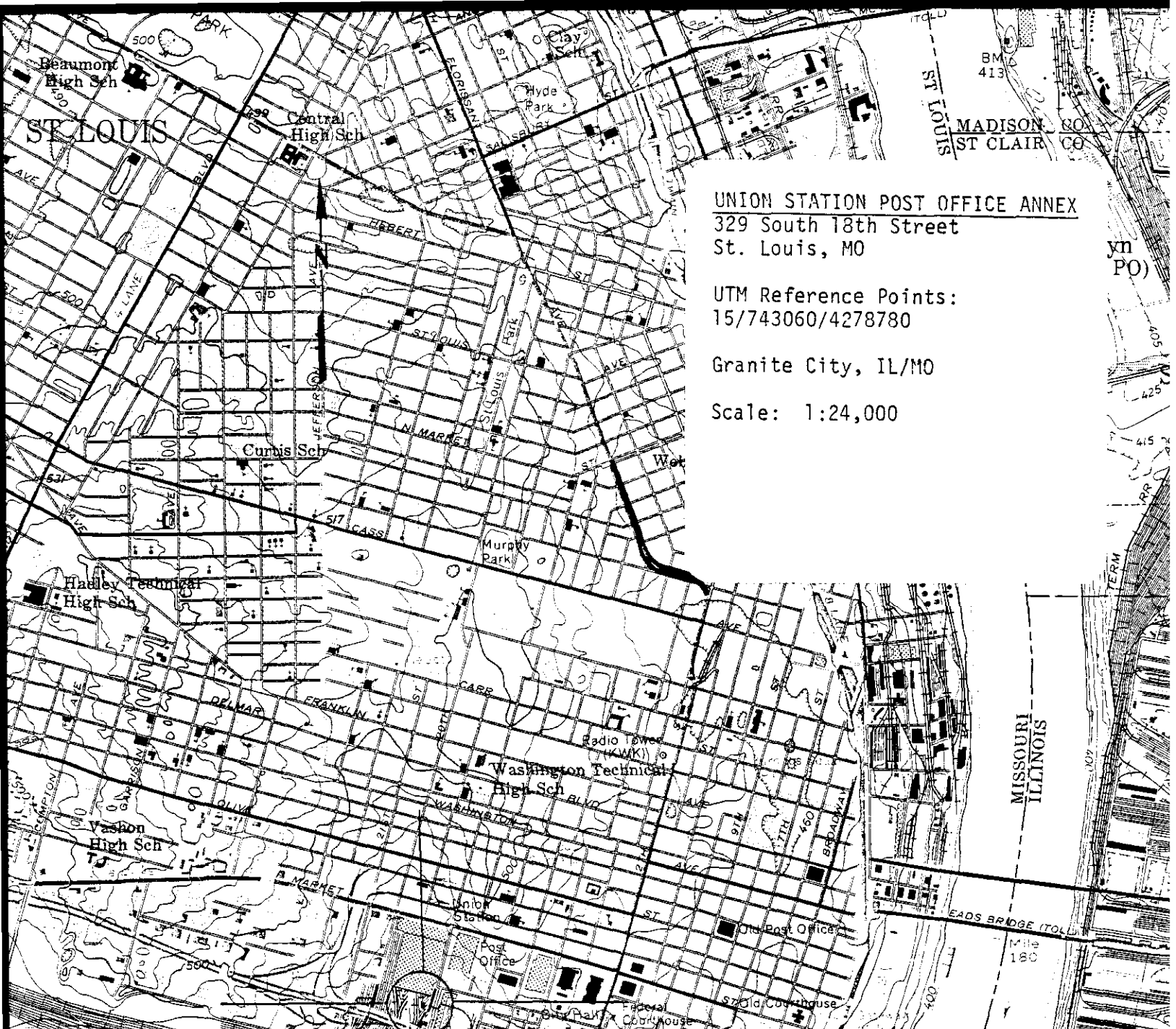
Continuation sheet

Item number

11

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2. James M. Denny
Chief, Survey & Registration
and State Contact Person
Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P. O. Box 176
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102
Phone: 314/751-4096
Date: July 31, 1985



UNION STATION POST OFFICE ANNEX
329 South 18th Street
St. Louis, MO

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UTM Reference Points:
15/743060/4278780

Granite City, IL/MO

Scale: 1:24,000

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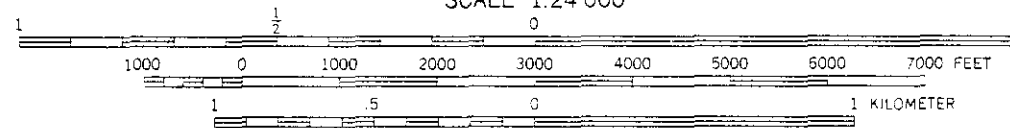
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UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

There may be private inholdings within
the boundaries of the National or
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THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA
STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801,
AND THE DIVISION OF GEOLOGY AND LAND SURVEY
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



POST OFFICE ANNEX
St. Louis, Missouri

Fig. 1 of 3 1892 plan of Union
Station rail yards

Source: from Report of
the Chief Engineer on Improve-
ments Made at Union Station
1902-1904.

Date: May 1985

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

MARKET STREET



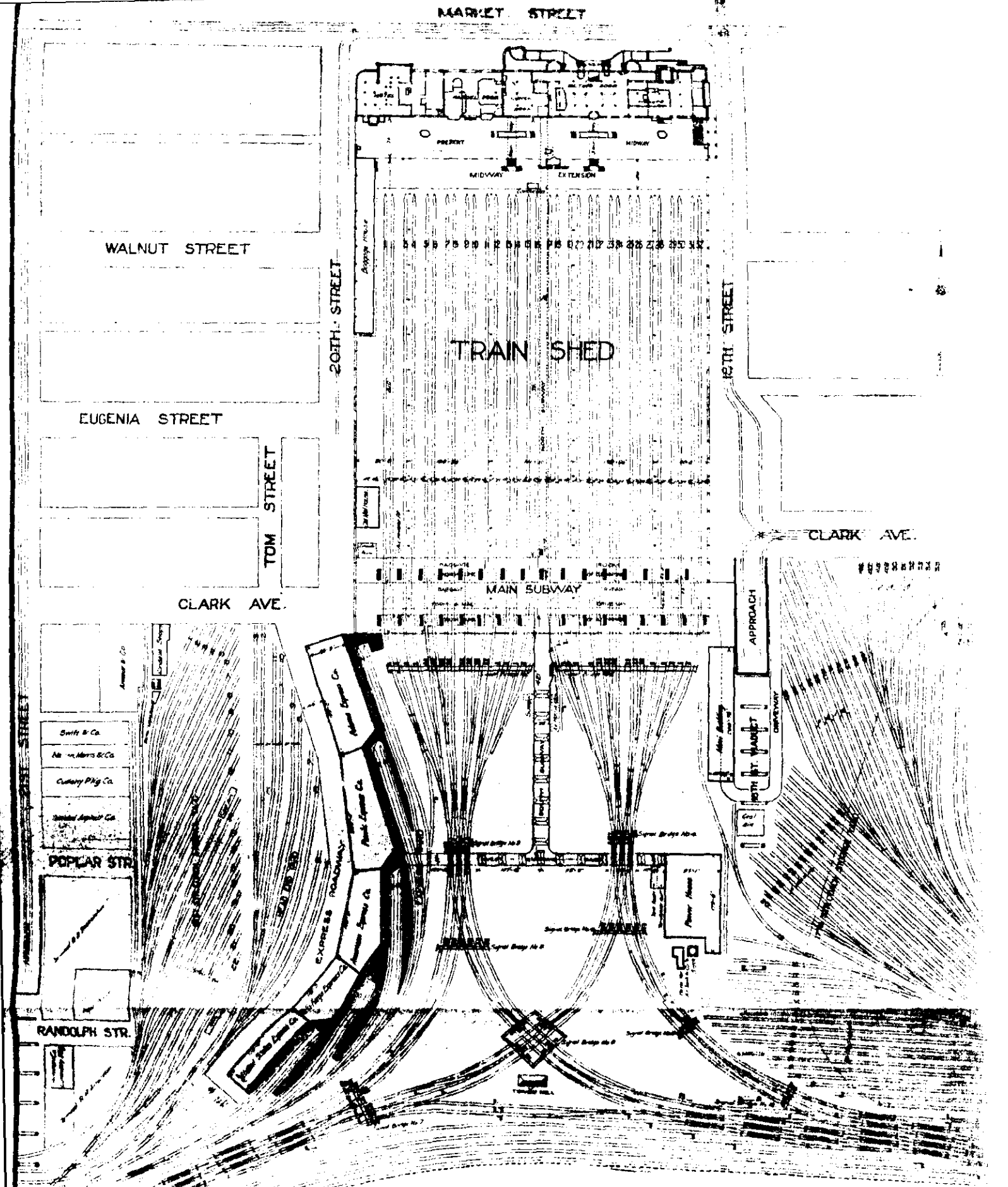
POST OFFICE ANNEX
St. Louis, Missouri

Fig. 2 of 3 1902 plan of
Union Station rail yards

Source: from Report of
the Chief Engineer on Improve-
ments Made at Union Station
1902-1904.

Date: May 1985

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.



GENERAL ARRANGEMENT
— OF —
TRACKS AND FACILITIES
— AT —
UNION STATION.
TERMINAL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION
ST. LOUIS, MAY 1904.

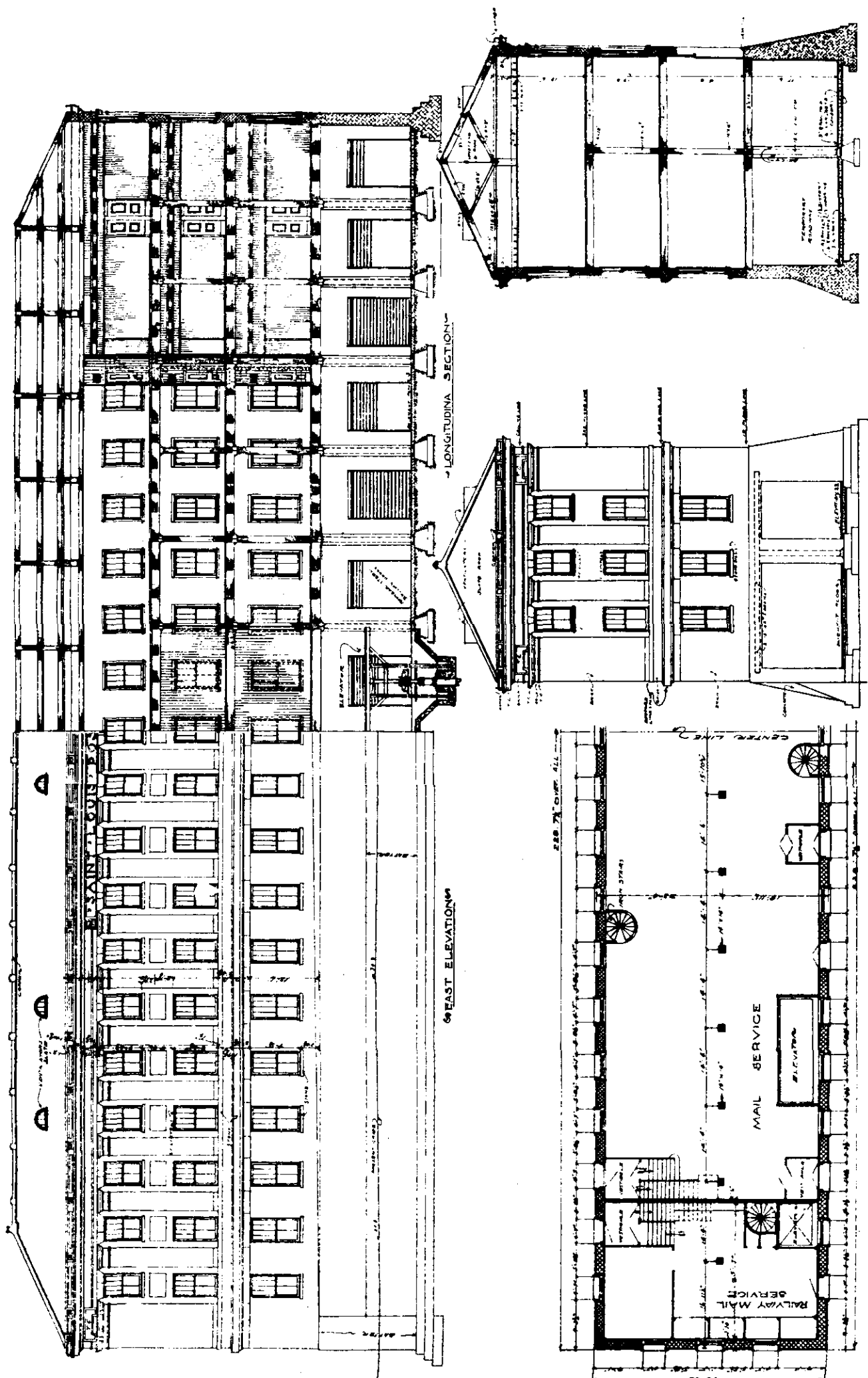
POST OFFICE ANNEX
St. Louis, Missouri

Fig. 3 of 3 plan, section and
elevation of Post Office Annex

Source: from Report of
the Chief Engineer on Improve-
ments Made at Union Station
1902-1904.

Date: May 1985

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.



TRANSVERSE SECTION
 TERMINAL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION OF ST. LOUIS
 GENERAL DETAILS OF MAIL BUILDING ANNEX
 UNION STATION
 EAMES & YOUNG ARCHT'S
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"
 FEB. 20, 1902

NORTH ELEVATION

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

LONGITUDINAL SECTION

EAST ELEVATION

POST OFFICE ANNEX
St. Louis, Missouri

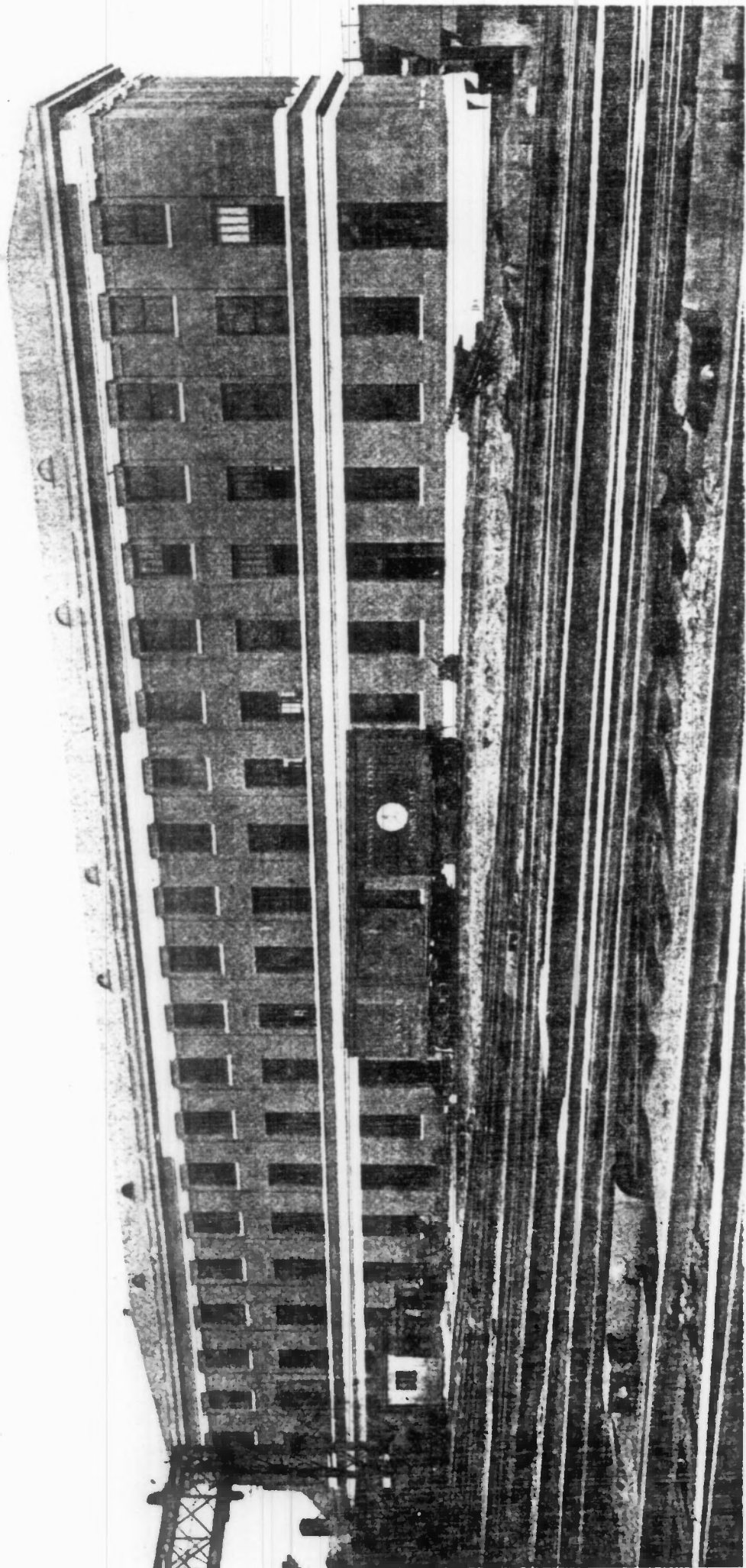
Photo 1 of 3 historical view
of Post Office Annex, 1904

Source: from Report of
the Chief Engineer on Improve-
ments Made at Union Station
1902-1904.

Date: May 1985

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

east elevation; camera angle west



POST OFFICE ANNEX
St. Louis, Missouri

Photo 2 of 3 contemporary view
of Post Office Annex, 1985

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch

Date: May 1985

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

west elevation; camera angle
east



POST OFFICE ANNEX
St. Louis, Missouri

Photo 3 of 3 contemporary view
of Post Office Annex, 1985

Photographer: Cynthia Longwisch
Date: May 1985
Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

north and east elevation; camera
angle southwest



UNION STATION. ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, SHOWING PLAZA AND FOUNTAINS

